

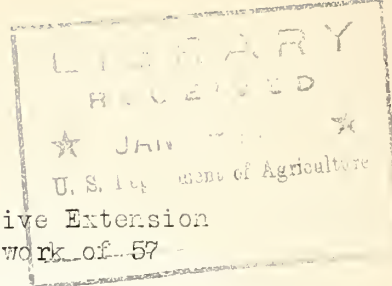
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LEADERSHIP - A CHALLENGE TO RURAL WOMEN

A radio talk by Grace E. Frysinger, Office of Cooperative Extension Work delivered in the National Farm and Home Hour, over a network of 57 associate NBC stations, Wednesday, November 6, 1936.



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There is a vital new force abroad in the land which augurs well for the future. Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen, both rural and urban, are awakening to the satisfaction as well as the justice of accepting responsibility to aid in constructive endeavors for the common welfare. Due to this fact, better conditions of home life, of work, of leisure and of community life are being enjoyed by countless citizens on farms, in villages and in cities throughout the nation.

Unselfish leadership of constructive endeavors for public welfare is one of the supreme expressions of nobility of character. The record of the ages reveals the names of men and women who have won undying fame because of deeds of valor and self sacrifice. Other men and women have given as nobly of their best selves without receiving recognition and acclaim when the situation which needed their contribution was a less dramatic one.

At present in our nation there is an ever growing recognition of the basic right of every normal citizen to live under conditions which permit him to obtain a status of economic and social security. If this is to be achieved leaders must be found in every city and hamlet and in the open country who do not need the blare of brass bands, the cheering of throngs, nor monuments of marble for their reward, but who will work unobtrusively, often in the face of discouragements such as apathy, prejudice and selfishness, because they have learned the depth of permanent satisfaction that comes from replacing the haggard lines of fear with smiles born of a new-found source of security and of understanding friendliness.

During the recent difficult years rural women have evidenced this quality of unselfish leadership in marked degree. With agriculture prostrate, they used amazing ingenuity to keep up family morale. They provided school lunches for hungry children. They kept needy neighbors off relief rolls. They gave shelter and food to those turned adrift from industry. They helped direct constructive use of public funds. They provided good times for those of all ages within the community and their clubs served as local units of the Red Cross and other relief agencies. Their faith, courage and spirit of service has never faltered.

There is a crucial challenge to rural leadership today for it must recognize that unless its plans for security include consideration of industry's needs, no permanent security can be assured to agriculture. America is one family. United we stand. Divided we fall.

In this quest for security for all our citizens the layman must recognize that he has a responsibility coordinate with that of the technically trained professional. The professional will be needed as a source of authentic information as to available facts, and to indicate those methods and procedures

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which to date have proven most effective in this field of effort. The layman has an equally responsible role. Any undertaking for the common welfare needs to be sponsored and planned by a group of interested, capable, public-minded, non-professional local residents, men and women who know local conditions, local abilities, local pride and local prejudices and who can evaluate possible choices, plans and procedures with effectiveness, and then win public opinion in behalf of such endeavors.

The time has come when the layman no longer rubber-stamps the recommendation of professionals but serves in this equally important though different role. The layman has stepped from the position of back-seat rider on a tandem bicycle to the position of co-pilot of a modern piece of aircraft.

Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizens, whose address is Rural Free Delivery, have daily opportunity to promote this desired goal of security for all. Daily contacts in family life, relations with farm operators in competitive fields, acceptance of community responsibilities and of civic duties, and individual and group relations with industry, provide such occasions.

Farm women must assume responsibility shoulder to shoulder with their husbands for the critical decision which must be made as to the responsibility of agriculture for national security, including the needs of industry as well as agriculture. The responsibility of the layman in achieving this desired security for all is paramount, and the farm woman will meet this situation as unselfishly as she has the challenges which have come to her in the past.

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